

Message Text

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53

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 PM-09 NSC-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00

INR-09 NSAE-00 PA-03 RSC-01 USIA-12 PRS-01 AID-20

PC-04 RSR-01 /114 W

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R 231725 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY RABAT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8525

INFO USINT ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

USCINCEUR

AMCONSUL CASABLANCA UNN

AMCONSUL TANGIER UNN

C O N F I D E N T I A L RABAT 1286

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS MO LY

SUBJECT: SENIOR BERBER OFFICER NAMED ADMINISTRATOR IN
MOROCCO' S MIDDLE ATLAS

1. LT COLONEL HAMMOU OU EL HADJ ARZAZ WAS INSTALLED AS
CHIEF OF KHENIFRA ADMINISTRATIVE SUB- DIVISION OF MEKNES
PROVINCE BY INTERIOR MINISTER MOHAMED BENHIMA MARCH 23,
ACCORDING TO MAP ITEM OF SAME DATE. PRIOR TO HIS NEW POST,
ARZAZ WAS DIRECTOR OF GENERAL STUDIES, GENERAL STAFF, OF
ROYAL ARMED FORCES AND BEFORE THAT WAS COMMANDER OF
ROYAL GENDARMERIE. ADMINISTRATIVE REGION OF WHICH KHENIFRA
IS CENTER WAS SCENE ARMED ATTACK ON POLICE POST AT
MOULAY BOUAZZA AND BOMB INCIDENTS AT KHENIFRA ON
THRONE DAY, MARCH 3. INCIDENTS WERE HAILED AS
BEGINNING OF POPULAR REVOLUTION BY LIBYAN- BACKED
MOROCCAN DISSIDENTS AND PROVOKED COUNTRYWIDE GOM
COUNTERACTION BY ARMY AND POLICE FORCES.

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2. IN CEREMONY ESTABLISHING ARZAZ IN NEW POST, INTERIOR MINISTER BENHIMA SAID IT UNUSUAL FOR HIM TO OFFICIATE (PRESUMABLY BECAUSE MINISTER DOES NOT ORDINARILY INSTALL OFFICIALS BELOW LEVEL OF GOVERNORS). HOWEVER, BENHIMA SAID BECAUSE LT COLONEL ARZAZ IS INVOLVED AND BECAUSE OF CARE AND INTEREST KING HAS FOR PEOPLE OF REGION, KING ORDERED BENHIMA TO PRESIDE. LATTER ALSO SAID HE PRESIDED TO DEMONSTRATE THAT THERE IS ABSOLUTE SECURITY IN REGION. BENHIMA REFERRED TO THRONE DAY INCIDENTS PERPETUATED BY " TRAITORS... CONNIVING WITH FOREIGN COUNTRY" WHO WANT TO SPREAD TERROR IN REGION. MINISTER SAID ARMY AND SECURITY FORCES PUT DOWN TRAITORS WITH SPONTANEOUS HELP OF ZAIAI TRIBES.

3. BENHIMA NOTED THAT BECAUSE ARZAZ IS NATIVE OF KHENIFRA REGION, IT WILL BE EASIER FOR HIM TO HAVE CONTACT WITH POPULATION WHICH WILL ENABLE HIM TO FIND SOLUTION TO REGION'S PROBLEMS. BENHIMA ALSO NOTED THAT KING HAD DIRECTED GOVERNMENT AND PARTICULARLY MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE TO DEAL WITH PROBLEMS OF REGION.

4. EMBASSY BIO FILES SHOW THAT ARZAZ WAS BORN IN 1939 AT AIN LEUH, SIZABLE VILLAGE NEAR AZROU AND IN DIRECTION OF KHENIFRA LESS THAN 40 MILES TO SOUTH. AREA IS HEARTLAND OF BERBER TRIBES OF MIDDLE ATLAS. FILES ALSO INDICATE ARZAZ RELATED BY MARRIAGE TO GENERAL ABDESLAM SEFRIOUI AND KING'S INTELLIGENCE CHIEF, COLONEL AHMED DLIMI.

5. COMMENT: APPOINTMENT OF ARZAZ TO ORDINARILY LOW LEVEL ADMINISTRATIVE POST IS SIGNIFICANT. IT IS, IN FACT, RECOGNITION BY KING THAT ALIENATION OF MIDDLE ATLAS BERBER TRIBES FROM GOVERNMENT IS VERY SERIOUS AND NO DOUBT FACILITATED CARRYING OUT OF THRONE DAY INCIDENTS. REFERENCE TO KING'S INSTRUCTIONS TO GOM AND MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE IN PARTICULAR TO DEAL WITH REGION'S PROBLEMS ALSO CONSTITUTES RECOGNITION THAT MIDDLE ATLAS PROBLEM IS SERIOUS. IT IS NOT AT ALL CERTAIN THAT MIDDLE ATLAS TRIBES WILL ACCEPT ARZAZ AS THEIR MAN IN ROYAL COURT. MUCH DEPENDS ON HOW MUCH GENUINE ATTENTION KING PAYS TO BERBERS WHO HAVE BEEN INCREASINGLY ALIENATED FROM REGIME IN RECENT YEARS. HOWEVER, APPOINTMENT AND ATTENTION GOM MEDIA FOCUSSED ON IT INDICATES KING MAY FINALLY BE FACING
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HIS BERBER PROBLEM AND TRYING TO DO SOMETHING CONSTRUCTIVE

TO REGAIN BERBERS' ALLEGIANCE.
PARKER

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